

# MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF  
CITY OF ALAMEDA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2010  
7:00 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Bonta called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Chair Bonta. Commission Members: Breuer, Dahlberg, Lindsey, Reeves, and Ryan

Absent: Commission Members: Harrison, McKean, and Viehweg

Staff: Dorene Soto, Eric Fonstein, and Rosemary Valeska

2. MINUTES

2.a. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 21, 2010

Motion (Reeves), seconded, and unanimous (with abstention by Lindsey) to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 21, 2010 as submitted.

3. CONSENT CALENDAR

(None)

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – PUBLIC

(None)

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

(None)

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.a. Alameda Towne Centre presentation

Michael Corbitt of Harsch Investment Properties gave the presentation, which included the following information:

- Negotiations are underway with a soft goods tenant for 30,000 square feet in the former Safeway building. Adjacent to this space is a second space of approximately 3,400 square feet. Site preparation work is currently underway. There will be new trees and landscaping as well as a connection to Kohl's.
- Alameda Kohl's is doing very well and is one of their flagship stores in California.

- Chipotle is using the Alameda Towne Centre store as a prototype for their other stores.
- The Alameda Towne Centre Walgreens ranked number four in sales for the entire chain during the week before Christmas.
- The Alameda Towne Centre Safeway is one of their top stores in Northern California.
- New tenants include:
  - Pearl's Burgers – approximately 1,700 square feet with outdoor dining. The opening is planned for early summer.
  - Sophistry – custom skincare.
  - Great Clips just moved to the interior mall.
  - New Pagano's store – 8,300 square feet, to be located in the former Great Clips/Blue Tomatoes building. Construction will start within the next 30 days with the opening planned for early-to-mid summer.
  - A new fruits and chocolate store will be opening in the interior mall.
  - Modern Mouse gift shop has been open for four months and doing well.
  - A national cell phone store is a possibility.
  - Harsch is currently seeking a quality, non-chain pizza tenant.
- Commission Members' questions and comments:
  - Commission Member Reeves asked about the future of the carwash. Mr. Corbitt stated that he was not free to comment, as the carwash was still under lease. However, he did state that the Alameda Towne Centre master plan showed that area as the future site of a restaurant.
  - Mr. Corbitt announced that Alameda Towne Centre and the Alameda Association of Realtors would be hosting a Green Conference event at the shopping center on July 17.
  - The Chair asked about other community outreach. Mr. Corbitt responded that Harsch has donated \$12-13,000 to local grade schools through the "Earning for Learning" program. Alameda Towne Centre will be made available to the Frank Bette Center for its Plein Aire weekend in July. Harsch also supports Girls, Inc., Boys & Girls Club, and Midway Shelter.
  - The Chair asked what was Harsch's greatest challenge besides the economic downturn. Mr. Corbitt responded that it was tenanting the interior mall. Mr. Corbitt also commended the City's Building Official and staff for their efforts in spite of being understaffed. He stated

that he would like the City to designate a point person to assist Alameda Towne Centre and the business associations through the permit process. He added that the Centre has developed “spec suites” to get around the need for permits in some cases.

- Commission Member Breuer commended the Centre’s progress. He also asked if it was true that the childrens’ dentist was leaving. Mr. Corbitt responded that he did not believe so.

The Chair thanked Mr. Corbitt for his presentation. Ms. Soto stated that Alameda does not recruit national tenants like other cities; however, we would assist Alameda Towne Centre with recruiting local tenants. She also stated that we hope to build a close relationship with the Building Division as a result of our upcoming move to the main City Hall, and we could help applicants follow up on the status of their building permits. The Chair stated that the EDC has heard similar comments from other sources and this has been brought to the attention of the City Council - there may be on-line solutions. Ms. Soto stated that the City has been working towards a One-Stop Permit Center and the Fire Prevention Office is now located adjacent to Planning and Building. This item was provided for information, only; no EDC action was requested.

6.b. Alameda marketing and advertising presentation

Ms. Soto stated that staff recently met with the representatives of the business associations to develop strategies for marketing Alameda as a whole. One such strategy is the development of a business directory and visitors guide featuring all Alameda businesses. The representatives of the business associations and Kyle Conner of the Alameda Theatre were invited to this meeting to present their marketing efforts.

Mr. Conner presented the Shop Alameda video that played at the Alameda Theatre over the holiday season. The Theatre had donated its services for the production of the video and waived charges for running it. Since its opening 21 months ago, the Theatre has been the venue for several charity and community outreach events. The New Year’s Eve event benefiting local nonprofits was very successful and will most likely become an annual event. Last May, the Theatre screened the EMS documentary film, *Level Zero*, with proceeds from the screening going to the families of the fallen Oakland police officers. The Chair asked how much revenue has been generated by the Theatre. Mr. Conner responded that the amount was \$4.7 million in the first 12 months and since May 2009, it is on pace to exceed that amount this year.

Robb Ratto, Executive Director of the Park Street Business Association (PSBA), commended Kyle Conner for donating the run of the Shop Alameda video. Mr. Ratto distributed copies of the Park Street District 2010 Shopping Guide as well as copies of the 2009 Alameda Blue Book. He stated that PSBA events are advertised in the Theatre’s digital display

cases. They also promote with the Book of Savings and through the PSBA website. He recapped attendance at PSBA's annual special events:

- Spring Festival, Mothers Day weekend, over 50,000
- Art & Wine Faire, last full weekend in July, over 100,000
- Classic Car Show, second Saturday in October, over 20,000

The Chair asked about vacancies. Mr. Ratto responded that even though there are businesses like Pippen Hill that are leaving, there are other businesses that want to come to Park Street. There is a possible new tenant for the former Carroll Travel building.

Kathy Moehring, Executive Director of the West Alameda Business Association (WABA), stated that WABA was in the process of upgrading their website. WABA businesses will be featured in the next Alameda Blue Book. She stated that partnerships are needed in Alameda. She commended Kyle Conner for his assistance with advertising and Mike Corbitt for the donation of Alameda Towne Centre's used holiday decorations to WABA and the West End merchants. She stated that the new visitors guide is for cross-promotion. For approximately 12 years, WABA has partnered with the East Bay Regional Parks District to present Concerts at the Cove. The Webster Street Jam is held in September and features international food, music, art, and wine. WABA advertises on *The Island* website. Ms. Moehring also noted the Farmers' Market held every Tuesday and Saturday. The Wine & Dine will be put on hiatus – a new concept is being developed that will involve a guided tour of Webster Street eateries. Ms. Moehring stated that WABA enjoys its partnerships with the Economic Development Department and the Building Permits Division. She presented WABA's new brochure, which contains an insert for recruiting merchants in other cities. The Chair asked what WABA's most pressing challenge was other than the economy. Ms. Moehring responded that the current economy was actually helping WABA due to lower rents, making it easier for small businesses to open on Webster Street. She noted some recent activity on Webster:

- The New Zealander Pub has a new owner. He is working on some tenant improvements and they will reopen soon.
- Neldam's is still in lease negotiations for the former Urban Forest space.
- Prema Patisserie will open in the former Webster Pharmacy.
- A Greek deli will be open in the former Berniece's beauty shop.
- Café Jolie will open in the former Tillie's.

Ms. Moehring added that the past six months have been better for Webster Street than the past three years.

The Chair asked what the EDC could do to support WABA. Ms. Moehring responded that every year Sue Russell of Economic Development submits a grant request to extend the streetscape improvements to the area between Pacific and Atlantic Avenues. The City's continued support in this effort is very important to WABA.

Mr. Fonstein reported on behalf of the Greater Alameda Business Association (GABA). No GABA representatives were available, as GABA's monthly mixer falls on the same evening as the EDC's regular meeting. This month, GABA was hosting a disaster preparedness mixer at the library. GABA's monthly mixer or dinner usually has a civic or business-related theme. Last month they held a forum on Measure B and next month they will hold a business roundtable. GABA is participating in the consolidated business directory. They also run ads at the Theatre, maintain a website, and have a Facebook page.

The Chair commended Mr. Conner and the business association representatives and thanked them for their leadership and commitment.

At this time, Mr. Corbitt asked for assistance in expediting Alameda Towne Centre's request to Public Works to remedy some sidewalk pavement problems along Otis Drive between Park and Willow Streets. He also expressed concern that the tenants along Otis Drive adjacent to the Centre were not keeping up their landscaping.

This item was provided for information, only; no EDC action was requested.

7. REPORTS

(None)

8. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

8.a. Upcoming EDC Agenda Items

- Commission Member Dahlberg requested an Alameda Point/Suncal update.
- The Chair requested an update regarding planned improvements to the City's website in view of the recommendations made by the Business Retention and Business Attraction Subcommittees.

8.b. Redevelopment Magazine

9. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF

- Mr. Fonstein stated that the City Council had accepted the report of the EDC's Business Attraction Subcommittee at the February 16 meeting. He added that the report was very well received by the Council Members.

- The Economic Development Commission will be moving from Alameda Point to the main City Hall this weekend.
- The Planning Division is taking the lead on the development of the Civic Center Vision Plan, which will encompass City Hall, the Carnegie Library, CVS Pharmacy, and the former Bill Chun service station. The City will hire a consultant to develop concepts for the area.
- Public Works has indicated that the draft Bicycle Plan will be presented to the City's boards and commissions during March and April.
- Commission Member Lindsey inquired about the status of the Park Street North of Lincoln Project. Mr. Fonstein responded that the City will be issuing an RFP for a consultant to prepare design components for a gateway statement. Mr. Ratto added that the EDC Members were invited to attend PSBA's February 24 board meeting to hear a presentation by Andrew Thomas of the Planning Division and Ian Ross, the consultant for the Park Street Gateway Strategic Plan, regarding the proposed "form-based" zoning amendments for the area.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Valeska  
EDC Recording Secretary

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